



# COMMUNITY COMMENTS

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## **PREREQUISITES FOR**

## **COMMUNITY WELL-BEING**

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### ***suburb***

### ***hinterland***

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the past six months, the Community Service staff has been deeply involved in working with citizens' groups in the metropolitan area of Dayton, Ohio. This work has been directed towards improving community conditions, new town development, and housing in areas near the central city. This issue of Community Comments to a significant degree reflects Community Service's studies and experiences growing out of our new endeavor. We had originally planned a large double issue of Community Comments to include much of the fine output of the citizens' group dealing with different aspects of their procedure, their dreams, plans, and projections for the new community. But this turned out to be premature.

It was the intent of the new citizens' group, the City of Dayton, and the agreement of the developer that the new town should have a balanced composition in terms of race and incomes and not drain off the affluent from the city, leaving the central city with a greater proportion of less well-to-do, as had been the case with other new towns. Economic studies that were developed did not encourage this hope, and the role of this project and the future of small communities surrounding central cities require more profound thought and study. Some of our work in these and other subjects, that became ever more clear as we preceeded in this project are shared in this issue of Community Comments. The fine citizens' group in which we are participating in endeavors to cope with these problems has only made a good beginning at learning the problems, defining its vision for a better world, and attempting to find how it can be achieved. We hope to be able to report on this group more fully in another issue.

Peter Kaplan and Judson Brown both joined the Community Service staff on a semi-voluntary basis to work for and with citizens' participation in the new town development.

We are indebted to The Journal of Human Relations for permission to reprint the article appearing in its current issue: "Mental and Social Health and Population Density."

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THE DYNAMICS OF METROPOLITAN CONGESTION  
by Griscom Morgan

The evidence of harmful effects of high density population on people in large urban areas seems to run contrary not only to much of the trends of our times, but also to the thinking of some wise and able people. For example, William H. Whyte in his The Last Landscape has written:

We are going to have to work with a much tighter pattern of space and development, and...our environment may be the better for it. This somewhat optimistic view rests on the premise that densities are going to increase and that it is not altogether a bad thing that they do. It is a premise many would dispute. Our official land policy is dead set against higher densities. It is decentralist, like official policies in most countries. The primary thrust of it is to move people outward; reduce densities, loosen up the metropolis, and reconstitute its parts in new enclaves on the fringe.

I do not think it is going to work out this way. Certainly, outward movement will continue, but if our population continues to grow, the best way to accommodate the growth will be by a more concentrated and efficient use of land within the area.<sup>1</sup>

What Mr. Whyte finds objectionable and terms "decentralism" is not decentralization in fact, but the dispersal of metropolitan populations in a wider area of the one or two percent of the nation's land on which ninety percent of its population is becoming concentrated. The Bureau of Census defines density of "standard metropolitan statistical areas" as the number of people per square mile in the central cities and their surrounding few counties or urbanization. In this sense, it does not reduce density to disperse the inner city population throughout the surrounding few counties. The evidence we have cited elsewhere in this issue points to serious harm from this excessive large population in the limited metropolitan area, not from the intensive use of land and housing in small cities of a few thousand.

Present governmental policy has supported the destruction of older low cost housing within central cities through urban renewal and dispersal of population in the surrounding countryside in real estate projects. It augments the displacement of the poor and the migration of the more affluent into the once fine agricultural land surrounding the metropolis. These policies leave much central city housing empty and decaying, some of this being older homes of fine quality, while simultaneously creating conditions that will lead to rapid deterioration in the areas surrounding the central city. We urge a more fundamental departure that requires deeper economic and social insight as well as the building and development of a new order of fine small cities throughout the country.

Jane Jacobs, in her Death and Life of Great American Cities<sup>2</sup> and her The Economy of Cities<sup>3</sup> also makes a plea for higher density of the metropolis. Much of her argument is cogent and valuable, as relevant to small rural towns as to large cities. Both she and Mr. Whyte point out what has gone in the name of "decentralism" is largely utopian, unrealistic scheming by theorists for garden towns on the outskirts of the metropolis that have no roots in history, in human life, in culture, or in economic realities. It leads to suburban sprawl, and is neither urban or rural, farm or effective park, but inefficient use of land to accommodate peoples' desire to escape from central city densities that keep chasing after them.

A hopeful prospect for the future of the metropolis is the conversion of the increasingly useless spokes of old railroad right-of-ways leading out of the central city into rapid transit corridors. These can enable people in small communities scattered far out from the central city along these railroad lines to have transportation into the central city at less cost and in shorter time than the extremely inefficient, expensive, and polluting automobile in the metropolis. For example, something like two-thirds of the land in Los Angeles and the surrounding area is devoted to automobile transportation and parking facilities, and yet the highways are overcrowded and emotionally exhausting. Such a new era of use of railway right-of-ways in close conjunction with automobile and short-run bus services may be on the way toward drastically revising the population distribution now conditioned by misuse of the automobile and superhighway.

The metropolitan centers of our nation cannot be saved from decay, their outskirts cannot be saved from endless development, and the towns and small cities cannot be saved from depopulation through prevailing methods and approaches to these problems. Futility and progressive failure on all sides of these issues stare us in the face. Except for the more affluent, people have not enough income to pay for new housing and urban development; consequently government programs are required to finance, underwrite, and plan new homes built on mass production scale. These projects, in turn, commonly come to grief.

Appalachian-like impoverishment and depopulation are extending into more and more rural areas. Most of the population has been forced off the wealthiest agricultural land to make way for our modern equivalent of the Roman Empire's latifundia - great agricultural estates operated to ship mass-produced food to cities.

Both Jane Jacobs, William Whyte, and the "decentralists" and theorists they criticize have failed to recognize the underlying economic dynamics which create the disastrous migration hinterland to metropolis. It is economic exploitation and impoverishment that most fundamentally curses small towns over the world, making them culturally sterile places from which people have to escape. For that reason people like Jane Jacobs see no hope for a vital culture elsewhere than in the central city of the metropolis. Repeatedly it has been found that the mass migration to the central cities has been primarily caused by the impossibility of making a living elsewhere.

We challenge the fundamental economic causes of all phases of this pattern of disaster, and the stop-gap and short-sighted procedures adopted as a means of coping with this pattern. The ever-increasing concentration of wealth, power,

and income in the hands of the few is centered around the metropolis. A current study of this sector of the American population with incomes above \$15,000 per year has been made by Fabian Linden of The Conference Board.<sup>4</sup> The income of these approximately twelve million families above \$15,000 per year might be called "surplus income" since it is available to be invested or not, spent as its owners see fit, and this fund of income per year totals about eighty billion dollars. Each year this fund is available to buy out more of the rest of the economy by that amount. By 1980, this rate of surplus income is projected to rise from 15% of the total national personal income to 23% of the total national personal income. The people receiving this wealth predominantly live in the suburbs of major metropolitan cities. According to the report of this study, this group is characterized as "likely to have no children or only one child."

In contrast to the wealthy minority, the increasing extreme of hopeless poverty grows at the other end of the economic spectrum. Throughout history economic orders like our own have led to these extremes of wealth and poverty. These extremes are the inevitable consequence of the characteristic rates of interest and dividends on investments that have prevailed in such civilizations.

We illustrate this economic dynamic by the fact that one penny invested at the traditional rate of compound interest would in two thousand years be worth the weight of the earth in gold. No economy can long sustain this rate of interest and dividend. It withdraws from hinterland areas the medium of exchange necessary for economic life. The ever greater concentrations of wealth enable powerful individuals and corporations to buy up the land, businesses, political, educational, and communication functions of the nation. The processes of taxation employed to cope with this problem inhibit the development of new creative and competitive businesses and economic exchanges, and too largely tax those with lower incomes. Even the heavy taxation of the wealthy in some countries does not stem the tide of concentrated wealth.

Maldistribution of income and extremes of wealth and poverty severely compound the more commonly recognized harm from speculation in real estate values and inflated land costs. When there is such a great difference in income between the wealthy and the poor, the wealthy are more able to buy up farm land and hold it out of use until they can sell it for many times the price paid for it, while in the meantime paying low taxes levied in terms of agricultural use. If taxes are raised on such land to cover its speculative increase in market value, taxes are also levied on bona fide farm land or land of poor holders of small tracts. This forces them out of business and their land goes onto the inflated suburban real estate market with the resulting urbanization of yet more territory in the vicinity of the metropolis.

Because the income of the majority of the population is insufficient for them to spend enough to maintain adequate demand for employment and goods, the government has to borrow the accumulated savings of the more affluent in order to maintain employment and market, as well as pay for war. These large governmental expenditures keep the economy from collapse, as with the record peacetime national deficit to give the illusion of prosperity to insure President

Nixon's re-election. In consequence, the interest on the growing national debt has doubled during the past ten years in comparison with the nation's tax income and has become the third largest item in the national budget.<sup>5</sup> Private debt has also accumulated under such circumstances. During the past twenty-five years it has increased twenty-five times, to 140 billion dollars, as contrasted with only a five-fold increase in the gross national product of the economy.<sup>6</sup>

This process has been repeated in civilization after civilization in the past, and the end result has been decay. Reform measures of more taxation of the wealthy proposed by more progressive legislators do not go to the root of the problem; they still leave high interest rates and difficulty of financing afflicting the economy. Not only are our rural areas starved of the money supply necessary to their life, but even our older large cities are also deserted by capital. The savings of the well-to-do are now increasingly invested in more profitable overseas industries. This is precisely what Adam Smith predicted of countries that accumulate debt as commercial nations have generally done.

Labor and industry in many of our most skilled industrial cities such as Bridgeport, Conn., Akron and Dayton, Ohio, and Utica, New York are not able to compete with labor and industry in newer areas of labor exploitation, and many old established industries are deserting them, leaving large pools of unemployed labor, empty factories, and heavier relief loads. This is happening not only because the older industrial labor has unionized and demanded higher wages, but also because the underlying human vitality of industrial labor is impaired through prolonged exploitation in large cities and factories. The income of the large old cities has to pay for an ever-increasing dead weight of taxes for services to take care of the old, unemployable, and less-able third generation offspring of once fresh and unexploited immigrants from rural areas. In addition, they must pay interest on the mounting indebtedness of governments ranging from local to national. In such ways these large cities cease to be competitive as locations for industry and fail to hold their own.

As we have pointed out, this is an old historical sequence among metropolitan civilizations. Henrick Van Loon described it in his Story of Mankind:

The people of Babylon and Assyria and Egypt had been part of a vast mob. They had been lost in the multitude. The Greek on the other hand had never lost touch with his immediate surroundings. He never ceased to be part of a little town where everybody knew everyone else. He felt that his intelligent neighbors were watching him. Whatever he did, whether he wrote plays or made statues out of marble or composed songs, he remembered that his efforts were going to be judged by all the free-born citizens of his home-town who knew about such things. This knowledge forced him to strive after perfection, and perfection, as he had been taught from childhood, was not possible without moderation.

In this hard school, the Greeks learned to excel in many things. They created new forms of government and new forms of literature and new ideals in art which we never been able to surpass. They performed these miracles



in little villages that covered less ground than four or five modern city blocks.

And look, what finally happened!

In the fourth century before our era, Alexander of Macedonia conquered the world. As soon as he had done with fighting, Alexander decided that he must bestow the benefits of the true Greek genius upon all mankind. He took it away from the little cities and the little villages and tried to make it blossom and bear fruit amidst the vast royal residences of his newly acquired Empire. But the Greeks, removed from the familiar sight of their own temples, removed from the well-known sounds and smells of their own crooked streets, at once lost the cheerful joy and the marvelous sense of moderation which had inspired the work of their hands and brains while they labored for the glory of their old city-states. They became cheap artisans, content with second-rate work. <sup>8</sup>

If we can achieve clear recognition of the basic problem, we can take appropriate action and avoid ineffective and harmful action. William Irwin, who for years was chief economist and educational director of the American Bankers Association wrote:

The American system can be preserved only if those who wish to see it preserved will ask themselves the question why is it being curtailed? It has continued to create huge aggregations of wealth...that seem to overshadow even the government itself...It has failed to find the remedy for unemployment...That an incomeless man was a lost consumer did not seem to occur to the American businessman.

If we fail to do the things that the history of the past fifty years has taught us need to be done, we shall deserve whatever we get. <sup>9</sup>

In past issues of Community Comments we have defined this economic problem and we have pointed out that for a few centuries it was solved during an era of European civilization that was dominated by a widespread network of culturally rich small cities of only a few thousand population and characterized by full employment, low interest rates, and effective population control. We have shown that in recent times the same principles have led to a similar well-being in a few societies and communities in Europe and America. The particular understanding and techniques employed are outlined in The Community's Need for an Economy and The Simplicity of Economic Reality. In these issues of Community Comments we did not deal with their relevance to population distribution or the harm to man from large city living. It is necessary to understand the interrelatedness of these two subjects, for without a more profound understanding of the economic problem, mastery over the urban problem becomes relatively impossible.

However, we must go a very important step further. Sound understanding of economics and advanced technology alone are powerless to save us. Something far more fundamental is required if we are to have an effective social movement

by which to master our problems. With this central factor - and sound understanding and forceful action - we can start to solve our problems wherever we are, whatever our circumstances; without it we will fail, however favorable our circumstances. I refer to the inner motives, practical brotherhood, and responsibility to our fellow men, nature, and the universe. Ortega y Gasset stated this principle as follows:

Human life, by its very nature, has to be dedicated to something... Given over to itself, every life has been left empty, with nothing to do. And as it has to be filled with something, it gives itself to false occupations which impose nothing intimate, sincere... Really to live is to be directed toward something. The goal is not my life, it is the something to which I put my life, and which is consequently outside, beyond it. <sup>10</sup>

It is not enough for people to be dedicated to a passion for collecting stamps, exploits on the stock market, sexual interaction, or preoccupation with personal power or fortune. Nor does patriotism suffice as an objective of dedication in this era of one world.

The importance of a deeper foundation for effective community life and for a civilization has been emphasized by wise men throughout the ages. Aristotle wrote that without such a larger order and perspective by which to live, the community disintegrates like the routed and disbanded units of an army. We see the consequence of failure to give this factor first place throughout our world. Vivid examples are to be observed in the alienation of youth in the schools, of employees and management in industry and business, or corruption and demoralization in government.

In the Old Testament, it is written "without vision the people perish" and "except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it, except the Lord watch over the walls, the watchman watcheth in vain." Those who are offended by anthropomorphic connotations of the words "Lord" and "God" may substitute "The Great Spirit," "Mankind," or "Nature." The common implication is of a need to live by larger realities and meanings to life than the utopias of writers, the plans of the planners, or the pleasures and self-interest of the present moment. Long range values and a more deepseated social movement concerned with all in the community is required for true personal, social, and economic well-being. Abraham Lincoln wrote of the lack of this ingredient in our culture as it found expression in the Missouri Compromise:

It forces so many good men among us into open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty, criticizing the Declaration of Independence, and insisting that there is no right principle of action but self-interest. <sup>11</sup>

A social movement or program of action lacking such a deeper foundation is bound to be abortive and short-lived. Soon after the crucifixion of Jesus when Jewish leaders were debating what to do with his followers, a great man among



them, Gamaliel, said:

Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this be the counsel or the work of men, it will come to naught: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. 12

It is up to us whether it will be of "man" or of "God" in our own endeavors.

The way and resources necessary to progressively master the economic and social problems of our time are really simple. They are in our own hands right where we are if we will start to live and act in neighborhoods, communities, cities, and regions in true brotherhood, in real community, and make economics a servant to great purposes rather than our master. In their own small ways many communities and sectarian groups have done this. For example, William Bailey, a banker in a county seat in Tennessee, awoke to the responsibility and potential of applying such principles in his community, directly countering the usual expectation of making personal profit the dominating principle of finance. He proved that his community would support him in doing it to the point that his county rose from poverty to prosperity. The followers of Father Divine, the Mormons, the Amish, the Hutterites, and the Seventh Day Adventists each in their own sectarian way have shown that brotherhood applied to economics can work wonders. Can we not learn to make responsibility to the future, brotherhood and neighborliness come alive on a larger and deeper scale? This is the requirement of our time.

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## ANECDOTES

Anecdotes can sometimes make clear what statistics cannot. A few that have come while researching and reporting on the effects of large city living may help the reader to understand the problem.

A visitor to our office told of an experience he had in the inn of an Austrian city. The inn had been in the same family for centuries, and its guest book had names of great European people over these centuries, such as the autograph of Beethoven. He was told of a peculiarity of the family that operated this inn. Each generation, the young man of the family who was to take control of the inn must marry a peasant girl. In this way the family maintained the rural vitality necessary for continuity of biological and personal adequacy.

For some years we taught a college course in the small community. This course extended over two periods of study interspersed with a work period during which the students went off to jobs in different parts of the nation. In one of these classes there was a student whose father was a city planner and was deeply committed to the large city. During the first of these study periods, the student insistently argued against what we had to say about the effects of large city living, and it appeared hopeless to talk to her about it. Then in her period of work between periods of study, she went to live and work in Baltimore, Maryland. When she came back to the second period of on-campus study we expected she would again proceed in her objections. But when we began speaking to the class with this assumption, she cut us short and said that while on the job in the city she had been observing the city from the background of what we had previously talked of, and now she was convinced.

FOOTNOTES

1. William H. Whyte, The Last Landscape (New York: Doubleday, 1968).
2. Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities (New York: Random House, 1961).
3. Jane Jacobs, The Economy of Cities (New York: Random House, 1970).
4. Reported by Sylvia Porter in her syndicated newspaper column of November 27, 1972. "Profile of the Affluent Family."
5. George F. Chruch, "Economics," Time Magazine (March 13, 1972). Writes on interest on the national debt: "most of the money goes to the banks...debt functions as a wrong-way income distribution device, channeling tax money that is paid in a large part by the poor and the middle class into the pockets of the wealthy holders of trust accounts or stock in banks."
6. Harry B. Ellis, "Credit Reform Urged as Americans' Debts Mount," Christian Science Monitor (November 17, 1972). Quotation from Peter Peterson, Secretary of Commerce.
7. Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations, as quoted in "The Simplicity of Economic Reality," Community Comments, XXI (March, 1972), p. 12.
8. Henrick Van Loon, The Story of Mankind (Boni & Liveright, 1921), pp. 60-61.
9. William Irwin, Address at 28th Midwinter Conference of Bank Trust Officers of the American Bankers Association, New York City.
10. Ortega y Gasset, Revolt of the Masses (New York: W.W. Norton, 1932)
11. Abraham Lincoln, from the great speech at Peoria, Illinois of October 16, 1854, in reply to Senator Douglas.
12. Acts of the Apostles, 5/34.

THE NURTURE OF A COMMUNITY  
by Paul Webb M.D.

What can small communities within the region of growing metropolitan densities do to avoid being overrun by massing urban populations? The town of Yellow Springs has for some years been actively seeking to cope with this problem. For example, some of its industrialists have located industrial plants in small towns needing industry, rather than enlarge existing plants in the Yellow Springs area. But the very attractiveness of Yellow Springs has been defeating its desire to remain small.

A Yellow Springs Village Councilman recently addressed the governmental council on the problems of maintaining the human scale and quality in the community. His brief statement brings the issue we deal with elsewhere in this issue of Community Comments down to a practical application in a specific community. Dr. Webb is President of Webb Associates, designing environments and clothes for space travel.

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Remarks made at a meeting of the Council of the Village of Yellow Springs,  
December 4, 1972

Fellow Councilmen:

I am deeply concerned. Let me express my concern in the form of the following questions.

What is our sense of community?

Is it possible to guide our course, to nurture and develop our felt community?

Are we unable to control? Do we feel impotent as population pressure in the Miami Valley increases?

Do we hear our constituency? Are we as councilmen sensitive to their thoughts, feelings, and aspirations?

I have seen these things:

--the non-partisan League of Women Voters, our most consistently contributory citizen's group, devoting enormous energy and untold time to studies of at least three things: zoning; planned unit development, cluster housing, and related things; income mix and variety of housing; how other communities, large

and small, take control of growth.

--the threat - yes, the threat - of an outside development group, who very naturally want to exploit an opportunity here to develop open land where housing is in such demand. First, mobile homes (four years ago), then a reluctantly improved series of proposed plans. Nor is this the only threat. Central Acres is only the first, and it may not be the largest nor the most powerful threat of change.

--I have seen over the past year more and more concern and anguish amongst residents both new and old - people in industry, retail merchants, and citizens of all kinds.

--I have seen us on Council create an Environmental Control Commission and it has begun to act.

--I have seen our population double in 18 or 20 years, causing our full-time police force to quadruple, our sewer and water tap fees to multiply - is it by two or four-fold - All as Dr. Cover, a wise man of large experience, warned us. Growth costs all of us more.

So where is Mr. Morgan's face-to-face community? Is it lost, or do we still have some of it in what we have grown to in 1972? What will be left in 3 years, in 6, in 9?

I am only sure of this: that this community should somehow find a way to own or legally control its 3800-acre plateau (Councilman Duncan's figure) and set about making a plan for its future with as much professional help as it takes to do a genuinely creative and exciting job.

I remind you of two outrageous suggestions made during the past few months. Concerning our surrounding land, Keith Howard, our newspaper editor, asked in a public hearing of Plan Board, why should we not raise the money to buy all the land within the green belt. And Ron Schnidt, I believe, has suggested that if we want to do some real planning - big time stuff - and to discover whether our small community can control its growth and development, foundation help could be sought for engaging professional help of national stature.

I do not think we are doing our jobs if we do not consider some outrageous ideas. Let's not be satisfied with a small revision of our comprehensive plan. Let's not wait for the next crisis, six months from now or whenever. I think we all have to think anew about Yellow Springs, our constituents, and the effect of our actions on the future.

URBAN RENEWAL-  
DESTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY IN THE INNER CITY  
by Peter Kaplan

Before and since its inception, different interest groups have attached different priorities to what has variously been called "slum clearance and urban redevelopment" and "urban renewal". The programs that have had these names have been viewed as a means of 1) improving municipal finances and commerce by luring more prestigious enterprises to the city, 2) providing cultural centers and thus making the central city more attractive for the well-to-do and the educated, 3) halting the flight of the affluent to the suburbs by constructing apartments within easy reach of urban amenities, and 4) improving the housing and social conditions of slum dwellers. These four aims of urban renewal are all theoretically valid, but unfortunately they are not necessarily compatible. In practice, implementation of land use changes in pursuit of the first three aims has had a negative impact on the fourth.

The provision of decent living accommodations in a socially satisfying environment for relocated families has not been a major priority. Rather, relocation has been seen as an obstacle to be overcome in order to convert urban land to uses that produce more taxes than housing for low and moderate income families. The quality of relocation services offered to displaced families has been poor - only one half of one percent of the gross project costs for all federally aided urban renewal projects through 1960 were spent on relocation.<sup>1</sup>

Urban renewal projects have brought about the demolition of thousands of low cost housing units (the majority of which were classified "substandard" by local or federal authorities), but they have not been responsible for erecting anywhere near the number of units that have been torn down. The consequent decrease in the number of low cost housing units has caused the rents in those low cost units that have survived the bulldozer to rise,<sup>2</sup> and often has intensified problems of overcrowding, particularly among blacks and other minority group members who have fewer neighborhoods from which to choose relocation residence. The dispersal of large numbers of poor people into other areas has encouraged the creation of new slums and magnified the problems of remaining slums.<sup>3</sup> In the worst clearance areas, dramatic improvements in the housing conditions of former residents have taken place, but generally urban renewal projects have resulted in negligible housing gains or actual worsening of housing conditions for poor families.

Whether or not urban renewal results in improved housing conditions for relocated project area residents is often a secondary issue to the harmful social costs it incurs by the forced, cataclysmic destruction of neighborhoods. The resultant breakdown of established communities and the dispersion of extended families have proven to be extremely damaging psychologically to the people who are uprooted, particularly those who are old or socially unstable.

Urban renewal projects have usually entailed the wholesale clearance of

large tracts of urban land and the construction on that land of new buildings. In many cases, the use of the land has been changed. A June, 1966 survey of 1,155 projects showed that 67% had been predominantly residential before redevelopment, while only 43% were predominantly residential after development that was completed or planned.<sup>4</sup> This shift in the use of tens of thousands of acres of land has resulted in the demolition of far more housing units than have subsequently been constructed on these sites. As of January 1, 1968, 404,000 dwelling units had been demolished on urban renewal sites, the vast majority of which housed low-income families.<sup>5</sup> Of the 195,999 units planned or already built on these same sites, only 73,931 were low and moderate income units, and only 18,766 were public housing units. Most of the 73,931 low cost units were aimed at the upper segments of the moderate income group. Of the total units constructed or planned, 62.3% were middle income and luxury units.<sup>6</sup>

The elimination of sound and unsound low cost housing units without equivalent construction has an adverse effect on city people who occupy low cost housing whether or not they live in project areas, by raising the prices of low cost units that escape the voracious bulldozer.

The influx of dislocated project area dwellers into other parts of the city cause sound neighborhoods to deteriorate into slums and remaining slums to become worse. Problems of overcrowding become more severe; because there are fewer places to live, families are forced to double up.

Since the rents that must be charged even for public housing are excessive for many low income families, turnover in the already existing housing supply must provide them with improved housing.<sup>7</sup> In order for this process of "filtering" (whereby lower income people occupy sounder housing vacated by more affluent families) to extend to the poor, a large number of additional units must be added to the total urban housing stock. This end is obviously undermined by urban renewal demolitions unaccompanied by the construction of an equivalent number of dwellings.

The pace of urban renewal demolition is likely to quicken in the coming years, as 360,000 additional dwelling units are scheduled to be demolished to make way for approved projects. Destruction of homes related to highway construction should proceed at the unprecedented rate of nearly 50,000 a year during the period 1969 - 1974.<sup>8</sup> It is highly doubtful that a sufficient number of suitably located standard dwelling units are available to meet the needs of displaced households, although the severity of the problem obviously differs from city to city.

If America is to be able to house all of its citizens, there is a real need to insure that the various public programs and the operations in the private sector of the economy do not work at cross purposes. Urban renewal and public housing efforts should always avoid competition with unaided private enterprise,<sup>9</sup> which implies concentration of public efforts on the construction of low and moderate income housing. Much of this housing (though by no means all or even most of it) should be constructed in areas where conservative private money will not go. In this way, sections of the cities that might otherwise be neglected will hopefully be improved.

In practice, local urban renewal officials have usually been unable or unwilling



to choose renewal sites in the context of metropolitan housing priorities. All too often, the first areas to be cleared have not been the worst slums but those areas which because of their relative social health or their locational advantages have been deemed most attractive for "higher uses". Boston's West End was thus the first low income neighborhood in the city to be bulldozed, while neighborhoods whose housing was in far worse condition were left standing.<sup>10</sup> In New York, urban renewal projects were for years concentrated in choice Manhattan locations that might have been sought by private enterprise, instead of in Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, the South Bronx and the outlying poverty areas.

The announcement of plans to renew an area usually cause its deterioration before the land is taken for a project. If land-taking is delayed for a number of years, as is often the case, deterioration can be especially marked. For example, plans to develop the Western Addition section of San Francisco were made public in 1950, but the land was not taken for nearly eight years thereafter. By 1957, 13% of the area's 4,119 dwelling units were vacant, compared to a city-wide vacancy rate of only 2%.<sup>11</sup> Redevelopment plans were also announced for Boston's West End in 1950, and by the time the land was taken in early 1958, many of the area's most upwardly mobile families had left. Their places were taken by low income tenants. This trend gave weight to the fallacious contentions of planners and city officials that the West End was a slum. In addition, buildings owned by absentee landlords in the West End were allowed to deteriorate greatly and vacancy rates shot up far above the metropolitan average.<sup>12</sup>

If clearance is extensively delayed, municipalities may be forced to take over and maintain private rental properties. The city's knowledge that these units will be demolished, and its limited financial resources, dictate a low standard of maintenance for tenants who must remain until clearance.<sup>13</sup>

The relocation of families in the relocation project area has encountered many problems, and has usually resulted in only small improvements in the quality of the housing occupied by project area residents. In evaluating the availability of acceptable relocation housing, renewal authorities don't usually consider that many of the dislocated families move into neighborhoods for which renewal is contemplated in the future. In San Francisco's Western Addition project area, 51% of the families for which information was available moved into adjacent sections of the Western Addition community, two-thirds of whose area was slated for future clearance.<sup>14</sup> In many cities, the situation often dictates that:

Given the realities of the low income housing market and the impact of public programs, it is likely that for many families relocation may mean no more than keeping one step ahead of the bulldozer.<sup>15</sup>

Since relocation has not been viewed as an important priority in the urban renewal process, the quality of relocation assistance for families forced from their homes by urban renewal has been poor. Perhaps the most eloquent testimony to this fact is the absence of surveys comparing the pre and post-relocation housing of former residents of urban renewal sites. Of the thirty-three studies cited by Hartman, only eight contained enough information for the reader to get

a realistic picture of how families had fared in relocation.<sup>16</sup>

Among those surveys from which the reader can get some idea of what has happened to displaced families, municipal and federal government figures generally give the impression that displaced families have improved the quality of their housing. Private studies, on the other hand, have found that the housing gains of these families have been minimal.<sup>17</sup> Non-partisan evaluation of local housing conditions after an urban renewal project is complete have often called government statistics into serious question.

The main reason for this governmental credibility gap is the dilemma of the local housing authority or renewal agency. It is required by law to find standard housing for displaced project area residents, but if no new public housing is built this is often impossible. Thus, in order to avoid curtailment of federal aid, local officials are forced to distort the facts. This is made easy for them by the absence of federal standards that define what constitutes acceptable relocation.

In most cities, far more time and money is spent gathering pre-clearance data (which is often exaggerated in order to justify proposed projects) than is expended for post-relocation surveys.

Inadequate evaluations of the housing available to displaced site residents are often made before clearance, as was the case in Boston's West End Redevelopment Project. Moreover, such surveys usually ignore entirely the housing preferences of area residents and whether or not these preferences can be adequately accommodated.

How relocation housing of project area residents compares with the housing they formerly occupied is difficult to determine exactly, since no consistent standards are used by local authorities to evaluate housing quality. In some clearance areas, housing was so bad that "it would have been difficult for families to have found a worse segment of the city's housing than the one they occupied."<sup>18</sup>

However, improvements have often been small, and even where large improvements in the housing welfare of project area residents have been made, substantial numbers of families still occupy substandard dwellings. Reynolds' nationwide survey of renewal projects in forty-one cities during the years 1955-1959 showed that 61% of the families dislocated by these projects relocated in substandard housing.<sup>19</sup> In projects surveyed by the Philadelphia Housing Association in 1958, occupancy of unsatisfactory units was reduced from 100 to 72%.<sup>20</sup> Studies that compare the small proportion of families that moved into public housing and those who relocated in private rental housing showed that the latter fared far worse in terms of housing quality.<sup>21</sup> This is especially disturbing given the slow pace of public housing construction and the unwillingness of many eligible families to utilize it. Thus, a greatly depleted and increasingly deteriorated private rental supply of low cost dwellings must figure more and more prominently in the relocation of families displaced by urban renewal.

Relocation has not usually resulted in an increase in living space for relocated families. In only six of eighteen studies cited by Hartman for which indoor space information was available was this the case. In three studies, however, there were increases in overcrowding, and several more relocation efforts failed to ameliorate already serious overcrowding conditions.<sup>22</sup>

Any scant improvements in housing welfare resulting from relocation are considerably offset by the social damage incurred by the wholesale destruction of neighborhoods. Among planners and local officials there has been a failure to grasp the very real distinction between slums and "low rent districts." This difference is described by Herbert J. Gans:

Slum dwellings...may be defined as those which are proven to be physically, socially, or emotionally harmful to their residents or to the community at large. On the other hand, low rent dwellings... provide housing and the necessary facilities to people who want, or for economic reasons must, maintain low rental payments and are willing to accept...inconveniences as alternative costs.<sup>23</sup>

Low rent districts may also be areas which are in the process of "unslumming." These neighborhoods are once again able to attract people back into them and/or retain upwardly mobile people who have a greater choice of residence.<sup>24</sup>

It is unfortunately neighborhoods that fit the above descriptions that are the first to be cleared for urban renewal. These communities have been especially attractive to the cities because their relative social health has promised to minimize relocation expenses and attract developers who would balk at building in the worst areas. Low rent districts have also been the first to be bulldozed because they do not provide the profits extracted from the city's worst slums by rackets and exorbitantly priced slum housing.<sup>25</sup>

Many planners have not had qualms about destroying low rent districts, since these areas often display characteristics that are generally considered to be undesirable: high dwelling densities, residential-commercial mixes, and minimal amounts of open space. The federal and local housing guidelines applied to slums and low rent districts reflect middle-class values and neglect important aspects of the quality of individual structures. The standards devised by federal and local planners and officials tend to attach to housing an importance it does not have among the working class as a measure of social status. Obviously, the conception of what constitutes decent housing varies among groups of people with different economic, ethnic, and urban-rural backgrounds. Thus, the proportion of its income that a low income or working class family would choose to pay for housing may be considerably smaller than the portion of its income a middle-class household will pay.

The physical layout of low rent districts serves an important function for certain predominantly working class groups such as the Italian-Americans of Boston's old West End. The high dwelling densities, narrow streets, and residential-commercial light industrial mixes of these neighborhoods permit a high degree of social control and a high level of interaction with neighbors, who are often members of the same extended family. This external environment serves as an extension of the home. It provides a stable basis for group identity and predictable interpersonal relationships and patterns of behavior. Destruction of this kind of positive social environment has been shown to have devastating psychological effects on those who are forced to leave it.

Slum and low rent districts also provide a tolerant, inexpensive environment

for families with serious economic, social, and psychological problems. These families or individuals seem to have the least attachment to their neighborhoods, but they may suffer the most from dislocation brought about by urban renewal. The tolerance they received in the cleared neighborhood may be absent in the section of the city they are removed to, even if it is fairly similar to the old neighborhood.

Many problem families are forced to move repeatedly to make way for renewal projects and large concentrations of these people may be herded into public housing projects and remaining slums:

With the increase in planned slum shifting and the rising proportions of "relocated" people in new projects, these new projects are often starting off today with the sullenness and discouragement typical of old projects or old perpetual unplanned slums... This is probably because so many of their residents have already lived with such experiences (i.e., forced disruption of neighborhood life) and take these along as emotional baggage. <sup>26</sup>

Public housing is considered a major repository for dislocated families, but the projects that have been built thus far are totally unsuitable for the former residents of low rent districts such as Boston's West End. Their physical design and institutional quality are not conducive to the predictable acquaintance patterns and social control of high density tenement neighborhoods, and thus their equally high densities become oppressive. For this reason, many working class families avoid public housing even if they are eligible. <sup>27</sup>

The problem of urban renewal requires far deeper insight and greater sensitivity for the needs of residents of cities who might be displaced. It requires vastly greater resources for housing those with lower incomes, and planning for the social as well as the physical needs of residents displaced by urban renewal projects. Given the limited funds available and the hostility of many local renewal and housing authorities toward construction of new public housing, these urgent needs will probably go unmet. <sup>28</sup>

FOOTNOTES

1. Chester W. Hartman, "The Housing of Relocated Families," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXX (November, 1964), p. 278.
2. Ibid., p. 275.
3. Jane Jacobs, The Life and Death of Great American Cities (New York: Random House, 1961), pp. 277-278.
4. National Commission on Urban Problems, Building the American City: Report of the National Commission on Urban Problems to the Congress and the President of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 162.
5. Ibid., pp. 81 and 162.
6. Ibid., p. 163. The urban renewal program had not had as harmful effect on the housing welfare of the urban poor as highway construction, which during the period 1956-1967 was responsible for the destruction of 330,000 urban dwelling units. (Ibid., p. 81.)
7. Frank S. Kristoff, "Housing Policy Goals and the Turnover of Housing," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXI (August, 1965), pp. 240-241.
8. Commission on Urban Problems, Building the American City, p. 83.
9. Kristoff, "Housing Policy Goals and the Turnover of Housing," p. 232.
10. Herbert J. Gans, "The Human Implications of Current Redevelopment and Relocation Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXV (February, 1959), p. 18.
11. Nathaniel Litchfield, "Relocation: The Impact on Housing Welfare," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXVII (August, 1961), pp. 199-200.
12. Gans, "Implications of Redevelopment and Relocation," pp. 17-18.
13. "Tenants Talk with City Aide and End Three-Day Sit-in," New York Times (August 15, 1970), p. 54, and David K. Shieler, "Rent is Withheld in City Tenements: Strike Dramatizes Heating Problems in Brooklyn," New York Times (November 8, 1970), p. 53.

14. Litchfield, "Relocation," pp. 201-202.
15. Hartman, "Housing of Relocated Families," p. 278.
16. Chicago Housing Authority report on relocation efforts for projects cleared 1952-54, quoted in Ibid., pp 281-282.
17. Compare, for example, Hartman's conclusions in "The Housing of Relocated Families," with the Housing and Home Finance Agency survey of the same name published in March, 1965.
18. Chicago Housing Authority report on relocation efforts for projects cleared 1952-1954, quoted in Hartman's "Housing of Relocated Families," p. 278.
19. Ibid., p. 280.
20. Ibid., p. 280. During the 1950's the housing improvements of the nation as a whole seems to have outstripped the improvements made by families displaced by urban renewal, which leads to the conclusion that many of those families that made the most satisfactory relocation housing arrangements during that time would probably improved their housing in any event.
21. Ibid., pp. 271, 283.
22. Ibid., pp. 269-270.
23. Gans, "Implications of Redevelopment and Relocation," p. 16.
24. Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, pp. 271-272.
25. Ibid., pp. 287-288.
26. Ibid., p. 278.
27. Chester W. Hartman, "The Limitations of Public Housing: Relocation Choices in a Working-Class Community," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXIX (November, 1963), p. 283.
28. When local public housing officials were asked the principle reason why their cities had no more public housing, one third replied that the Housing Authority's evaluation of the local situation indicated that no more public housing units were needed. This reply was obviously a function of the housing commissioners' political conservatism rather than actual community needs in most cases. (Hartman and Carr, "Housing the Poor," p. 50.)



MENTAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH AND POPULATION DENSITY  
by Griscom Morgan

About the turn of the century, Jack London went to live in the East End of London to study the area, and wrote one of his most important books on this experience, entitled The People of the Abyss. Jack London found ample confirmation of the findings of sociological studies that nearly all of the cockneys of east London were but a generation or two removed from rural England, and that urban living for the working class was progressively exploitative of the human resources that had migrated from rural areas. Because of this experience, Jack London was able to view with objectivity his own childhood in large cities in America, and to see that what occurred in London was characteristic of large cities throughout the world.

Jack London's findings were similar to those of earlier observers, such as the great Arabian scientist Ibn Khaldun around five hundred years ago. Khaldun observed that degeneration from dense urban living "is inevitable, and the average curve of the rising and degeneration of urban families is the space of four generations." <sup>1</sup> Aristotle had come to a similar conclusion with less specific reference to individual degeneration: "a great city is not to be founded with a populous one. Moreover, experience shows that a very populous city can rarely, if ever, be well governed." <sup>2</sup> More precise demographic data for cities in general led Warren Thompson, when director of the Scripps Foundation for Research in Population Problems, to write during the forties that "all the evidence indicates that no urban population living in cities of 100,000 or more, and probably in cities of over 25,000 will long continue to replace itself." <sup>3</sup> Dr. Sapur Faradun Desai, a prominent Indian scientist, reports a similar long-term trend that came to characterize the Parsees of Bombay, India after they moved into the city from rural areas. After several generations of urban living, wrote Mr. Desai, "quantitatively the Parsees are dwindling; qualitatively there is indirect evidence to show that they are on the downgrade. A once great race has begun to show lesser vitality than ever before; they are prey to various mental, physical, and social ills." <sup>4</sup> Poverty and bad housing do not explain this phenomenon among the Parsees or elsewhere. The Parsees are among the most privileged groups in Bombay. Substantially, the same pattern has long existed in American cities. Statistics collected by Fabian Linden of The Conference Board show that the twelve million affluent families of the United States, those with incomes above \$15,000, predominantly live in suburbs in the vicinity of large population centers. These people, according to Sylvia Porter's report of Fabian Linden's findings, "are likely to have no children or only one child." <sup>5</sup>

The world-wide pattern of long-term, generation to generation, harm from dense urban living is perhaps best proved by the exceptions to the rule. The Surashtras of Madura, <sup>6</sup> India have for centuries survived the highly urbanized city environment, but only by being rigorously isolated from the surrounding urban society, with separate tax systems, living in small villages scattered throughout the city, separate judiciary, and extended families, carrying over the pattern of

rural villages. Even so, their rate of tuberculosis infection is extremely high. The Italian-Americans of Boston, Massachusetts, are another exception to the rule of declining numbers from generation to generation; they too, live within the traditions of Italian village life, with small communities maintaining their traditional extended families within the larger city. At least with the Surashtras of India, when this isolation breaks down, and the people begin to participate in the surrounding city life, their immunity to harm from urban density is gone. So these exceptions to the rule do not disprove the rule.

It is true that large cities with a relatively high proportion of their population recently immigrated from rural areas are sometimes fairly free from the characteristic degeneration of large city living. Hong Kong is a noteworthy example of this, as is Tokyo, much of its population having been destroyed by the fire bombing during the Second World War.

Progressive deterioration from generations of high-density city living has its corresponding effect among lower animals. Articles in Scientific American,<sup>7</sup> The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists,<sup>8</sup> and The Ohio Journal of Science,<sup>9</sup> have summarized extensive evidence that high density among lower animals leads to stress, exhausting the vitality of animals. Each generation born to parents that have lived under such stress starts life more handicapped than the previous generation.<sup>10</sup> The effects of such high density on animals are analogous to the mental, sexual, emotional and physical pathology of highly urbanized man.

It has been objected that we must not draw conclusions about man from the effects of high density living on lower animals. Yet in a wide range of research, science has been learning about human function from laboratory animals, and we must take such evidence into account even though we must keep critical of its relevance to man. However, it is beyond doubt that both in captivity and in the wild, most animals are known to suffer from high population densities.

The suggestion that much human impairment results from high density living has been discounted on the ground that there has seemed to be evidence to show that crowding was not harmful after all. For example, Jonathon L. Freedman and Paul Erlich<sup>11</sup> recently published results of a study they made which showed that a few hours of crowding of people in a room was not harmful to their performance. They inferred from this and from other comparable evidence that the large city is not so harmful after all. But their conclusion was based on a misconception. They assumed that moderate crowding of people in rooms or houses was at issue rather than population density per square mile. We may have crowding in an isolated farm house, or in a small village, and we may have freedom from crowding in a very dense urban area; density being defined by the Bureau of Census as the number of people per square mile. It is high densities per square mile that prove to be so harmful. R.C. Schmitt, in the 1966 Journal of the American Planners,<sup>12</sup> reports a study based on this distinction between density and crowding. His findings, from statistical correlations, was that "with crowding constant, density still was related to morbidity, mortality, and social breakdown, whereas with density held constant, neither crowding, educational level nor income was related to any measure of social disorganization." If we add to the

factor of density at any given moment, the factor of how many years or generations people had been subject to dense living conditions, we find that density gains even more in importance.

Hidetoshi Kato writes that "high population density accounts for seven or eight of Japan's ten greatest social ills. Reacting to extreme overcrowding in our cities, people rush to the suburbs and to the countryside to buy land and build homes into which they can withdraw." Kato observes that "Japanese have unconsciously already begun a psychological defense against overcrowding. Withdrawal and passive tolerance of overcrowding are part of a syndrome that dehumanizes people, and, as we have seen, can lead to greater disruption of human behavior. That syndrome has clearly taken root in Japanese society." <sup>13</sup> Withdrawal from social involvement and responsibility leaves society bereft of the major resource for mental health and social order - people caring for each other and exercising social responsibility and informal social control. When these resources are gone, formal resources of the police, prisons and psychiatric services become progressively more impotent and themselves victims of the same pathology.

An article by H.R. Lantz in Sociology and Social Research correlates mental illness of people in the United States Air Force with the size of the population of their home towns. His conclusion is that "the general pattern is fairly consistent and is suggestive of a greater degree of mental health for persons in sparsely settled regions."

Comparison between rates of failure in the last published Selective Service mental tests of inductees from the eight northern states with the largest cities and the fourteen northern states with the fewest large cities, reveals three times higher rates of failure in the highly urbanized states. <sup>14</sup> Since the abler youth (both black and white) and a preponderance of the nation's wealth selectively migrate to metropolitan areas in and around large cities, this comparison is a significant measure of the harm done the nation's human resources.

The author <sup>15</sup> also compared census data of rates of murder for "standard metropolitan statistical areas" of high and low density. Among metropolitan areas above a quarter million in population, the rates of murder for high density areas (above 900 per square mile) was more than twice the rate of murder for low density metropolitan areas (of less than 250 per square mile). A similar, though less dramatic, contrast turned up in comparing high and low density metropolitan areas of less than a quarter million in population. Interestingly, the rate for crimes in general was not so dramatically responsive to high density. This corresponds to data on change in crime rate of increasingly urbanized Britain and the United States, in both of which violent crimes have increased more rapidly than crime in general. In the United States the rate for all crime rose seven percent during the first half of 1971, while violent crime increased eleven percent. <sup>16</sup> How long can this progressive increase in crime of our highly urbanized nations persist before civilizations crumble?

Among both men and lower animals, high density leads to emotional stress, social disorganization and fighting. With the widespread possession of guns, this fighting is reflected in the rate of murder even more than it is reflected in

the rate of crime in general. It is probable that the rate of murder is paralleled by a similar difference in relative incidence of insanity between high and low density populations. The famous Manhattan Study of mental health of people living in downtown Manhattan revealed that of the people interviewed, eighty percent had detectable psychiatric disorders, and twenty-five percent had significant neuroses that made them indistinguishable from patients in mental hospitals.<sup>17</sup>

A dramatic example of the sociological disaster that comes from high population density is the Pruitt-Igo housing project in St. Louis. The planner had planned for a density of almost twenty thousand people per square mile, and the project was altered to involve thirty-five thousand per square mile. Sheer ignorance of the social and psychological effects of high density allowed the developers to achieve low cost per apartment by crowding apartments, but it made the entire expensive housing project a human impossibility. In the light of experience, the current plan is to reduce Pruitt-Igo's density to about two thousand people per square mile, by destroying most of the buildings.

Evidence of harm from high density of population arouses disbelief among people emotionally and economically committed to the large metropolis. Statistical and historical data alone are not enough to prove the case. We need explanations as to how density causes harm. There is an associated question whether modern technology can eliminate causes of harm - as by correction of polluted atmosphere or infectious disease.

The 1968 annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science had a section on "The Use of Space by Animals and Man,"<sup>18</sup> and part of the section was devoted to the effects of density on animals and man. When the panel of scientists from over the world (of which the author was a member) who were to discuss the subject were asked by journalists if the harmful effects of density could be eliminated, not one indicated belief that it could.

Over the past twenty-five years, the author has been studying problems associated with urban densities, and particularly with causes of harm from large city living. It early became apparent that density, rather than crowding was the more harmful variable. Many a villager has much more interpersonal interaction than the average city dweller. An important cause of harm from large city density is its disintegration of small community associations that give individuals healthy social contacts, security, social control, personal identification and stability of culture. This is in line with the biologist Clyde Allee's pioneering discovery that many species of animals have a range of optimum size of group (which may vary to some degree depending on its history and circumstance) above and below which it does progressively less well. Apparently the same is true of human beings. The higher the density of population beyond an optimum, the harder it is to form and maintain small groups, and the more the individual is lost in the impersonal mass; which Clyde Allee found caused stress and harm to such animals as chickens.<sup>19</sup>

But the loss of good small community organization may not be the only cause of harm from high population densities. In biology and psychology we have assumed that interaction between animals or persons was limited to overt physical contact through sight, sound, and touch. In the realm of physics, we now

know that the immaterial "field" has an influence paralleling that of the material particle. Electric motors, radios, and electronic devices work on this principle. Around thirty years ago, Dr. H.S. Burr, then professor of neuro-physiology at Yale Medical School, demonstrated that living things also have immaterial fields that are part of life processes. He came to the conclusion that biological fields extend beyond the limits of the body to the point that such fields may interpenetrate each other. <sup>20</sup>

Recently, Cleve Backster, a leading lie detector expert, has used a polygraph to demonstrate that plants and animals are sensitive to disturbances in each other, even when shielded and at a considerable distance from each other. <sup>21</sup> Thus, we may not limit our consideration of modes of interaction of large densities of animals or men through immediate physical and social contact. We need to consider how sensitivity to excessive fields of animals at a distance from each other could be harmful to man.

Clyde Allee found that animals need the right amount of stimulus from numbers - too much or too little stimulus impaired well being. There is a suggestion as to how this stimulus might operate in studies by a neurosurgeon who has been working on stimulating nerves by a very slight electric current of the same wave form as the brain wave shown on an electroencephalogram. Dr. M.J. Edwards <sup>22</sup> found that while a very slight and brief period of electrical stimulation would stimulate nerve development, too long and great a stimulus would exhaust and ultimately destroy a nerve. Since nerve impulses slightly activate radio waves of a wide range of radio-frequencies, and the nervous system is a sensitive receptor of radio waves, we can conceive that excessive density of the electrodynamic fields of life could cause too great a stimulation, and hence, over a long period of time, exhaustion of the neuro-endocrine system. High density living of animals and man does cause exhaustion of the adrenal cortex and harm to the neuro-endocrine system.

We cannot say positively why harm is associated with high densities of animals and man, but the evidence of such association is very strong. Good social policy should work toward smaller, less dense cities until it is discovered if, or how, the large dense city can be made more healthy for mind and body and society. Instead of depopulating rural areas and strip-mining beautiful land to support half of America's population in one percent of its area, good social policy would develop a stable and wide distribution of population in smaller cities widely distributed over the land.

## FOOTNOTES

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## A PERSPECTIVE OF OUR HERITAGE

by Judson Brown

The present predicament of North American cities is described elsewhere in this issue of Community Comments by Griscom Morgan and Peter Kaplan. This article attempts to put the present situation in the perspective of our heritage in order to help us understand how we might best direct our efforts.

The White Roots of Peace is an American Indian communication group that travels around the country to present the message of the American Indian. This group relates the early history of the colonization of North America from the point of view of the eastern American tribes. According to the Iroquois tradition, the Iroquois Federation was founded by Deganowida with the planting of the Tree of Peace. Everytime the Indians came together around the council fire, they would rededicate this Tree of Peace in the light of the Great Spirit so that it might grow stronger and larger in the hope that one day its branches might reach over all people: all the Indian tribes and the new immigrants to North America.

Each time the Iroquois met with the white man in Council from 1617 to the establishment of the American Republic, they exchanged belts or wampum in token of the covenants (treaties) made between them. Together these covenants formed a covenant chain linking all the Indian tribes and all the new colonists together as one people. In these repeated councils between the sachems (leaders) of the Seneca, Mohawk, Oneida, Quebec, Cayugas, Onnondagas, and the colonists such as those in Manhattan, Albany, Massachusetts Bay, and New Plymouth, the Indian speakers would indicate how they had been keeping their part of the covenant and would ask the white representatives why it was that they were not as strong in keeping the covenant. The white men explained their situation in relation to the King of England and the King of France or particular problems in the colonies. The Indians made certain that all the issues were discussed in council so the whole situation was clearly understood. They would then take council among themselves or in the presence of their white visitors to decide what actions were required, and dedicated themselves to the most appropriate one, always signifying their commitment by exchange of belts or wampum. In such manner, the tribes of the Five Nations kept the peace among the Indian nations and the French, English, and Dutch settlers for over one hundred and fifty years.

The historian Cadwallader Colden says of the method of government of the Five Nations:

Each nation is an absolute Republick by its self, governed in all Publick Affairs of War and Peace by the Sachems, or Old Men, whose Authority and Power is gain'd by and consists wholly in the Opinion the rest of the Nation have of their Wisdom and Integrity. They never execute their Resolutions by Compulsion of Force upon any of their People. Honor

and Esteem are their Principal Rewards, as Shame and being Despised are their Punishment...

Their Great Men, both Sachems and Captains, are generally poorer than the common People, for they affect to give away and distribute all the Presents or Plunder they get in their Treaties or War, so as to leave nothing to themselves. If they should once be suspected of Selfishness, they would grow mean in the opinion of their Country-men, and would consequently lose their Authority. <sup>1</sup>

At the time of American colonization, Europe was in striking contrast to the freedom of North America. The colonists moved to North America for its freedom. Tom Paine wrote at the time of the founding of the American Republic:

So deeply rooted were all the governments of the old world, so effectually had the tyranny and the antiquity of habit established itself over the mind that no beginning could be made in Asia, Africa, or Europe to reform the political condition of man. Freedom had been hunted round the globe. Reason was considered a rebellion and the slavery of fear had made men afraid to think. <sup>2</sup>

The American pattern of civilization as envisioned and developed by Paine, Washington, Jefferson and their fellows was in strong contrast to the "old order," in its establishment of freedom of thought among the colonists. Nurtured under the Tree of Peace and far enough away from Europe to be outside its direct domination, these Europeans of the New World modeled the government of the United States on the principles of the best pattern known to them, that of the Iroquois Five Nations. Applying this principle, Jefferson held that the United States would best develop as a land of small communities linked in voluntary association to accomplish common objectives.

In 1787, when the Northwest Territory (including Ohio) was opened for settlement, the actual situation had departed from Jefferson's vision. At that time, Ohio was inhabited by Algonquin, and the terrain was largely forested. The colonists east of Ohio, for the most part, lived in small communal townships in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania, while in the South they lived in a society of large landholders and small back-country landholders. Land in the East was wearing out after seven generations of exhaustive farming, and a few cities were developing as people left the land. In 1787, the only city with a population greater than 25,000 people was Philadelphia, and the total population of the United States in 1790 was about four million people. In the 1800's, Ohio was the land of escape from worn-out farms, growing domination by urban capital, and the competition from the big southern planters. All over Ohio and the settlements further west, the white men pushed through the forests, carving out individual homesteads instead of village settlements, and butchered the Indians who were in their way. The carefully nourished Tree of Peace was cut and burned, and the trail of broken treaties was begun. A value pattern of extreme preoccupation with self-interest became dominant among American men.

Rugged individualism, the old world domination in a new guise, had predictable effects. It "hedged the original communal township plan of New England back in the Northeast and barred the west from the types of communal handicrafts that developed in New England... Hence when Eastern capital began to centralize and dominate the agricultural industries there could be no unified resistance from, or competition by farm cooperation." <sup>3</sup> The result was the rapid centralization of capital in the midwestern cities and the formation of the metropolitan order in which we live today.

While riding on a bus through the state, it occurred to me that Ohio has a large number of metropolitan areas for a state of its size. The urbanized regions that have their centers in Toledo, Dayton, Columbus, Akron, Cincinnati, and Cleveland all have upwards of three quarters of a million people. This is in contrast to upstate New York, which has a more orderly pattern of villages, small and large towns, and cities spread fairly evenly over the land. In Technology and Culture of the Small Community, Arthur Morgan makes some observation on Ohio's plight as it appeared to him in 1912:

The most dominant and striking example in America was the agricultural town. Its main reason for being was, not as a place to live a full and interesting life, but as a service place for agriculture. Aside from three or four churches and the public school, the community activities largely revolved around exploiting labor and land to serve the urban need for food.

There was another reason for the low repute of small towns. The money made in the community was taken to the big city. The agricultural wealth of Iowa and Illinois went to Chicago. The small town had only the leavings. <sup>4</sup>

Today this economic starvation of rural areas characteristic of many civilizations, has proceeded more rapidly and more completely than in previous eras. What once took centuries to accomplish is now taking place in decades. Larger and larger areas of rural America have been depopulated. The metropolitan order was built on the principle of one man dominating the other. The institutions ordered for the accumulation of wealth by those who are already rich, the economic exploitation and starvation of the countryside, and the concentration of people around the metropolis is the old order from which our forefathers sought an escape. Now that most people have left the small towns for the larger cities, the harmful biological effects of urban densities are becoming apparent where they are no longer obscured by the vitality of new immigrants from the countryside. Historical processes that once took centuries are foreshortened and we can more quickly observe and evaluate what is taking place. We can predict that increasingly with the breakdown of community in the metropolis, the people of the metropolis will fail to reproduce themselves, and so the old order will pass away. As this old order passes, what shall take its place? What became of the Tree of Peace planted 400 years ago?

Thereby itself like a tree it shows;

That high it reaches, as deep it grows  
And when the storms are its branches shaking,  
It deeper root the soil is taking.  
Be then no more by storm dismayed,  
For by it the full grown seeds are laid;  
And tho' the tree by its might it shatters,  
What then, if thousands of seeds it scatters? <sup>5</sup>

We cannot project what the new order will be, because it is up to us to build it and shape it as we go about the work. Nevertheless, we know that a different order is in prospect, and as we choose the new order and begin to live in it, the seeds of the Tree of Peace will grow strong in fertile soil.

For a glimpse of what this new order may be like, we might look at the trees and plants of the long perfected vegetable kingdom. Each individual plant has a different set of needs for nutrients, light, and water, but in a biome (a biological community) each finds a place and in their interaction, the plants grow and continue to grow all the time they are living in relationship with each other. Such should be a model for human communities, with individual growth in relationship with each other forming a larger community. At no point should individuals be trampled by those at the top of the heap, in the way of life that has for so long passed for civilization. The new order will be the perfection of man in his order of creation in the light of the Great Spirit.

But there it is: the newest democracy ousting the oldest religion! And once the oldest religion is ousted, one feels the democracy and all its paraphernalia will collapse, and the oldest religion, which comes down to us from man's prewar days, will start again. The skyscrapers will scatter on the winds like thistledown, and the genuine America, . . . will start on its course again. This is an interregnum. <sup>6</sup>

FOOTNOTES

1. Cadwallader Colden, The History of the Five Nations (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1958), p. 20.
2. From the notebooks of Judson Brown. Taken from an anthology of Early American letters.
3. Robert West Howard, Two Billion Acre Farm (Garden City, New York: Country Life Press, 1945).
4. Arthur E. Morgan, "Technology and Culture of the Small Community," Community Comments, Volume XXI, No. 1, (August, 1971).
5. Christian Ostergaard, translated from the Danish by J.A. Aaberg, Hymn: "That Cause Can Neither be Lost nor Stayed, which Takes the Course of what God has Made."
6. D.H. Lawrence, "New Mexico," The Survey Graphic, Vol. LXVI, No. 3 (May 1, 1931), pp. 153-55.